UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/491
9 October 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session
Agenda items 82 and 95

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

ANNEX

Report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women 1990

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 1990 the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) began a planning process for the decade leading to the year 2000, to develop and refine its strategic approach for supporting the efforts of women of the developing world to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and communities. The challenges of delivering strategic programmes which involve and benefit grass-roots women have increased in this rapidly changing international environment. The strategic planning takes into account these changing situations, and how the catalytic initiatives of UNIFEM can demonstrate to larger funding agencies, successful models of intervention. In this regard, increased attention to programme planning, in addition to project support, is viewed as of paramount importance.

2. During the planning process in 1990, UNIFEM staff members contributed to reformulating a mission statement and goals to fulfil the Fund's mandate to provide direct support for women's projects, and to promote the inclusion of women in the decision-making processes of mainstream development programmes.

Mission: To support efforts of women of the developing world to achieve their objective for economic and social development and for equality, and by so doing to improve the quality of life for women and men alike.

Goals:

1. To make a difference for development efforts of the women and their families in the developing world by:

   (a) Identifying key areas where UNIFEM support can have a significant impact in terms of enabling women to determine and carry out their economic and civic activities and to participate in and benefit from decision-making on the use of mainstream development resources;

   (b) In collaboration with women of developing countries and other partners, designing, implementing and evaluating strategic programmes, projects and activities in these key areas;

   (c) On the basis of experience, identifying which interventions and designs achieve women's objectives and disseminating findings about effective models to partners, including women and decision-makers in Governments and in the development community.

2. To build and maintain UNIFEM as an effective instrument of advocacy and action in service of the women of the developing countries.

3. In a collaborative effort, the staff of UNIFEM set the operational objectives for the management of UNIFEM overall programme, as well as its financial and human resources. Progress is being made towards meeting these objectives, some of which are noted in the present report.

II. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

4. To define strategies which best allow UNIFEM to make the most effective use of its limited resources, innovative approaches are identified and promoted that not only meet women's needs, but contribute to local and world development, and have the potential for replication elsewhere or adoption by other agencies.

5. The overall UNIFEM programme is further defined by regional strategies:

(a) Africa Investment Plan (AIP);

(b) Asia and Pacific Development Strategy (APDEV);

(c) Western Asia Strategy (WAS);

(d) Participatory Action Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean (PAPLAC).

These strategies evolved from extensive consultations with Governments, women's groups and partner agencies in each of the regions. In the first half of 1990 regional strategies were refined consistent with the priorities of regions and the overall strategy of UNIFEM.

6. The UNIFEM global programmes continue, namely, its technical support for women's access to food technologies, credit, and financing for micro-enterprises. These technical programmes, which were piloted chiefly in Africa, are being expanded globally. Staff has been redeployed to establish a technical unit at headquarters to give support globally to these expanded efforts, as well as to strengthen UNIFEM capacity to monitor, evaluate and disseminate findings from these activities.

7. As the work of the Fund progresses, it is recognizing that, in addition to the knowledge base on women in development it is creating, it is also playing a significant role in increasing the capacities of a reservoir of women, particularly at the grass-roots level, who constitute a movement for change.

8. The following is a brief report of UNIFEM innovative and catalytic activities in four regions, and the strategic directions chartered for the decade of the 1990s. Some of the lessons derived from UNIFEM's experience, its new initiatives, and an indication of possible geographic extensions and new approaches, are also briefly outlined.

A. Africa region

9. The Africa Investment Plan - 1991-1992 (AIP), endorsed at the 28th meeting of the UNIFEM Consultative Committee, is based on the recognition of the extreme hardships African women and their families are facing as a result of the economic crisis in the region. The AIP recommended priority areas of food security, small enterprise development and macro-economic planning are, therefore, the focus of programme development. At the same time, there has been closer management of ongoing projects, including timely identification and resolution of problems that may stand in the way of achieving project goals.

10. Programme activities in Mali are an example of how the Fund can build upon initiatives taken by the region itself. A UNIFEM mission to this country provided assistance to the Union Nationale des Femmes Maliennes (UNFM), by helping define and elaborate follow-up activities to the Lomé Women in Development workshops held in October 1988 and February 1989. As a result of this mission, UNFM will hold a national seminar in 1991, bringing together representatives of governmental and non-governmental groups to develop a three-year national programme for women in development in Mali.

11. In response to a request by the Government of Benin, UNIFEM and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) jointly sponsored a similar national seminar to identify new directions for women in development in this country. One important area identified for priority action was the training of grass-roots communities in the identification and formulation of projects. Training in these skills, with an emphasis on gender awareness, was also recommended for both governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in design and implementation of development projects for women. The results of two diagnostic studies on factors affecting women's employment and food consumption at the household level were also reviewed at the seminar. These studies, funded by UNIFEM, were carried out by the Benin non-governmental organization, Centre d'Information de Recherche et d'Action pour La Promotion des Initiatives Paysannes (CIRAPIP). Findings will also be addressed in sectoral strategies to be developed and presented at a donor round table at Geneva in 1991, and will be further examined by a national commission set up to monitor the structural adjustment programme in Benin.

12. The "Community-Based Integrated Rural Development in Kassala Province" project in Sudan, illustrates the elements of sustainability and institution-building that can result from UNIFEM funding of women's initiatives. The project, executed by Save the Children Federation, assisted in the establishment of training programmes in agriculture, home economics, literacy and sanitation. As an outcome of these initial activities, women in the Kassala Province formed their own community development committees and established a revolving loan mechanism. The project has generated an interest among a wide range of donor agencies, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has promised future support following the completion of UNIFEM funding.

13. As a complementary part of the Fund's larger strategy of support to women in the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) region, a major three-year preparatory programme has been launched to help strengthen capacities in post-independence Namibia, building on the findings and recommendations of two missions undertaken in 1990. The first mission jointly carried out by UNIFEM and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), assessed the status and needs of women and the government's perception of these needs. Women non-governmental organization activities were also reviewed in order to advise on the appropriate mechanisms for integrating gender concerns in national development programmes. The second mission was to develop a plan of assistance to the Government which would respond to Namibia's high rate of female unemployment.

14. The missions resulted in the formulation of a strategy to ensure women's full involvement in the Government's plans to promote the informal sector and develop small-scale enterprises. This approach will assist a number of government departments, non-governmental organizations and private sector agencies in their efforts to provide support to women entrepreneurs. The three-year programme will be executed by the National Planning Office of the Namibian Government, with backstopping provided by the UNDP Senior Adviser on women in development at Windhoek. UNIFEM proposes to provide $765,900 of core resources to fund five of the projects within the programme, and to support a national project officer for programme monitoring. An additional $655,000 is anticipated from the Finnish National Committee for the sixth project. The World Food Programme (WFP) will also support this component.

15. At the invitation of SADCC, the first "Gender Analysis Training Workshop" was conducted at Arusha in July 1990, for the Livestock, Fisheries and Wildlife Coordinating Units of all countries of the region. Two additional workshops were held in November in Zimbabwe for the staff of the Agricultural Research, Food Security, Soil and Water Conservation and Forestry Units. The workshops resulted in each SADCC Coordinating Unit drafting plans of action for implementation in both ongoing and pipeline projects within the SADCC framework.

16. In connection with the AIP programme management plan, some of the problems of project effectiveness have begun to be addressed through adoption of tighter monitoring procedures. For instance, a UNIFEM mission to Kenya in September 1990 included a Terminal Tripartite Review of "Sindo Women Fish Processing and Distribution" project. The review concluded that project implementation had been adversely affected by weak management, the most serious consequence being the inability to transfer management skills to the project's implementation committee. The review recommended that a project adviser be recruited from an appropriate non-governmental organization, on the basis of ability to strengthen management, install appropriate business systems and provide training to an elected implementation committee composed of Sindo women beneficiaries for the duration of the project. The longer term objective is to expand small enterprise potential, possibly through a credit scheme in collaboration with the non-governmental organization, Kenya Rural Enterprise Programmes.

17. Closer monitoring of projects has also helped to ensure project sustainability and effectiveness. For example, a mission was undertaken to Ghana to monitor five UNIFEM-funded projects. UNIFEM presence at a terminal review of the project "Women's Apple Marketing Cooperative" was valuable in facilitating negotiations between the women and the District Cooperative Bureau to lower the deposit rate for beneficiaries and enable the marketing cooperative to become officially registered. A visit to the jointly sponsored (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID and UNIFEM) project, "Enhancing Opportunities for WID" demonstrated the importance of monitoring the pre-implementation of a project. In this case, the visit helped the National Project Coordinator to work within the requirements and procedures of each donor, and to facilitate putting this country-wide women in development project - the largest government-executed project in the country - on the right track at the starting point.

18. In terms of UNIFEM collaboration between various United Nations agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations, for the improvement of the economic situation of women's groups, UNIFEM direct support to "Women's Socio-economic Groups in Rural Areas of Rwanda" was described by an April 1990 Tripartite Review as very successful. The project has increased agricultural production, set up income-generating activities, and promoted livestock raising and artisanal production. Co-funded by UNDP, the project trained personnel of the Executing Ministry in project management, and forms an integral part of the UNICEF national household food security program in Rwanda. A non-governmental organization implements the credit component while United Nations Volunteers provides advisory and training services. In addition, the project has the full collaboration of five technical ministries through their respective sectoral extension services.

19. The Tripartite Review further confirmed that the project is reaching its long-term goal of implementing self-help activities in 20 women's groups and is generating resources from other donor organizations to fund the continuation of the project once the initial pilot phase is completed. The project also incorporates an important new emphasis in UNIFEM programming on the environment. The UNDP/NGO Division, through a local coordinating committee, will provide technical assistance for environment-related activities such as soil conservation; UNICEF has plans to strengthen agricultural techniques; UNFPA is formulating a project to provide assistance to the same women's groups in health-related matters, while UNDP will fund additional training and an expert post. This multi-agency support will help to consolidate current project activities and extend the project through the next UNDP programming cycle, when it is anticipated UNDP support will be extended to more women's groups. This is an excellent example of the Fund's catalytic role - how with limited inputs from the Fund's resources, interest can be stimulated and resources generated from other agencies.

20. In an effort to strengthen organizational capacity in Francophone Africa, in December 1990 UNIFEM organized a training program at Dakar for potential Francophone consultants. Participants were trained in participatory methods of project identification, formulation and evaluation. This programme was the

first of its kind organized by UNIFEM for consultants in Africa, and serves as a base for creating a roster of potential consultants familiar with the UNIFEM project cycle - an investment in future project design and management.

21. As a follow-up to efforts of the United Nations Steering Committee and the Inter-Agency Task Force to monitor the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, and at the request of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Programme, UNIFEM prepared two reports in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on "Strengthening Capacities of African Women Farmers", and "Engagement of African Women as Agents of Development at All Levels". UNIFEM participation on the Steering Committee and Inter-Agency Task Force has helped the Fund to recognize the need for establishing "early warning systems" at the household level as an important step towards national food security. It has also helped identify more clearly the impact on women of agricultural policies.

B. Asia, Pacific and Western Asia regions

22. The Asia/Pacific Development Strategy was endorsed by the Consultative Committee at its twenty-sixth session. The strategy focuses on "impact points", defined as points of intervention that would benefit large numbers of poor and low-income women. UNIFEM maximizes its impact by influencing macro-policies; ensuring preparation and use of gender specific information and statistics; providing gender-sensitizing training, especially for senior governmental decision-makers; and strengthening institutions that deliver key resources and services such as credit, research and information to grass-roots women. The Strategy also continues to stress upscaling of small pilot projects, particularly at grass-roots levels, so that greater numbers of women can benefit from its activities.

23. In collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), a regional project in women's vocational training in the Pacific served as a catalyst in creating awareness of opportunities for women in technical trade occupations. As a result, an awareness campaign using media materials portraying women in technical occupations was launched, as well as training courses for women in non-traditional fields such as vehicle maintenance and repair. UNIFEM identified focal points in 10 participating countries in order to institutionalize non-traditional vocational training programmes at governmental and non-governmental levels. Project experiences will form the basis of a regional seminar for senior representatives of governmental departments including women's bureaus, departments of planning, and trades training institutes. Existing policies will be examined in light of the project experiences toward devising reforms that address the obstacles preventing women from entering vocational occupations and trades.

24. In an effort to highlight environmental issues that have been intrinsic to many UNIFEM-supported projects, funding is being provided for a Women and Environment Resource kit produced by the Asian and Pacific Development Centre

for use by policy makers, planners and activists. It will provide a comprehensive overview of the status of the environment and the role women play in the region. Women's practical experience at the grass-roots level will be used to link gender and environment issues. Case-studies showing women's various approaches to improving the environment will be drawn from interviews to be conducted with forest, rural, agricultural and urban community members.

25. In line with its commitment to promote the role of grass-roots leaders in the development process, UNIFEM, collaborating with the Worldview International Foundation, is supporting a participatory training programme for community leaders in Sri Lanka. Twenty leaders were identified by the village people of 10 villages to receive training in basic communication and management skills. This training will enable them to identify community needs and to plan and organize community activities through participatory approaches. They will have access to a revolving loan fund and cooperative marketing scheme to be established for responding to communities' economic needs.

26. An innovative and catalytic UNIFEM project in India, fundamentally changed the way the Census of 1991 was collected. Building upon a seminar held by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on data collection and use, the project introduced "citizen participation" as a critical element. Women activists and academics collaborated with the Government to increase the visibility of women's varied and significant roles in India. Probing questions were designed to capture these issues and were incorporated into a manual for training trainers. This project also raised public awareness of women's economic roles through posters distributed nationwide, and helped create an environment which encouraged women to report their work accurately to the enumerators. Finding this model practical and effective, the United Nations Statistical Office requested UNIFEM assistance in adapting it for use in several other countries presently designing their censuses.

27. With UNIFEM support, a UNDP pilot project on sericulture and vegetable farming was expanded to women in the area of Udaipur, in western India. The objective of the project is to improve women's income and nutritional practices, and to organize "mahila mandal" (women's groups) in order for them to become self-reliant. The beneficiaries live near the project villages and belong to an economically and socially disadvantaged group. The scope of their vegetable farming and sericulture input needs was determined through a survey of 300 women of the villages.

28. Training was provided in mulberry cultivation, silk-worm rearing techniques, cocoon production and reeling, soil preparation and treatment for white ant control. As a result of the training, income for families engaged in sericulture increased by Rs 400 to 1,500 per crop; an increase of Rs 1,200 to 4,500 annually. Women's self-confidence has increased through the "mahila mandal" promotional efforts for community participation in the development process. The success of the project was recognized by the Tribal Area

Development Department which, after only eight months following the pilot, gave a cash award to members of the "mahila mandals" organized under the project.

29. UNIFEM supported a multi-disciplinary team on a mission to three countries in the Pacific to ensure that macro-policies link with grass-roots women's needs. The team conducted formal workshops as well as one-on-one pilot training to the Planning Ministry, Women's machineries and the Council of Women's non-governmental organizations in these countries. In addition, key institutions such as the Pacific Women's Bureau of the South Pacific Commission, a number of major universities, non-governmental organizations, multilateral and bilateral organizations have formed an inter-agency group to develop close coordination of all women in development initiatives in the region. The project is developing a gender planning framework which will be incorporated into technical courses for schools of planning in the region.

30. A revolving credit scheme and training programme were established in cooperation with the Women's Union of Viet Nam for a handloom weaving project in Viet Nam. This project which expands a centuries-old tradition of handloom weaving cloth for home use into a marketable item, came as a result of Mai Ha women recognizing the need to increase family income with off-farm activities among hill tribe women. With this new encounter with the market, it was found that steady access to quality yarns was hindered by erratic incomes due to fluctuation in the farm economy. By stabilizing access to the yarns needed for handloom weaving, productivity could be increased. A UNIFEM credit scheme, involving a pilot group of 70 women from Mai Ha village, enabled these women to purchase higher quality yarns through access to credit in times of a poor harvest yield. All 70 women repaid their loans within the six-month pilot period.

31. At the invitation of the Government of Mongolia, a UNIFEM project identification/formulation mission, in cooperation with the Mongolian Women's Federation, identified projects that fall within the Asian Regional impact-point strategy. The Fund will assist the Federation efforts to influence policies that benefit women, and enable them to meet the demands of a more open economy through vocational training within various sectors. UNIFEM is also working with the Institute of Animal Husbandry to sensitize with respect to gender, research on pastoralism, a sector with a high percentage of participation among Mongolian women. Information derived from this research will increase the Fund's understanding of how to work effectively with female pastoralists and strengthen its ability to foster exchanges among other regions of the world where UNIFEM is working on this issue.

32. UNIFEM undertook a monitoring visit to the Maldives to discuss the workplan and reporting requirements of a project "Strengthening the Capacity of Women in Mainstream Development", executed by the Department of Women's Affairs.

33. The Western Asia Strategy (WAS) was interrupted by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, and the subsequent evacuation of the Economic and

Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) from its headquarters at Baghdad. The greater proportion of UNIFEM projects in the region are executed by ESCWA; therefore, regional implementation has come to a complete standstill and country projects are operating at a much slower pace. UNIFEM projects executed by other agencies, Governments or non-governmental organizations, are proceeding as planned.

34. Although the unification and consequent reorganization in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic led to project delays during the year, in the Republic of Yemen, the Government is looking at upscaling a UNIFEM-supported project on biogas technology as a cost-efficient way of supplying household energy. The introduction of biogas technology relieved women of such tasks as collecting wood and agricultural residues, handling animal manure and exposure to the by-products of burning organic materials. It also improved the sanitary and health conditions of households and the general environmental conditions of the villages. The time saved by women enabled them to attend project-run extension classes in literacy, numeracy, health and nutrition, poultry-raising and vegetable-gardening. The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has expressed the Government's intention to adopt a national programme on biogas technology as an energy policy to be included in the next Five-Year Plan.

35. Another UNIFEM project in the Syrian Arab Republic has also had an important ripple-effect. This project provides literacy and vocational training for illiterate women from Busra and Rastan and the 23 surrounding villages, and trains women teachers and vocational instructors. Two training centres have been established that serve over 2,000 rural women. Course training books on sewing, knitting, fruit dairy processing, are being tested and produced by the project. One hundred teachers have been provided with literacy training and are, in turn, training over 2,000 other rural women.

C. Latin America and Caribbean region

36. The work of this region is divided into five subregions: Central America; Mexico, Panama and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean; the English-speaking Caribbean; the Andean countries; Brazil; and the Southern cone. To maximize use of the Fund's financial and human resources, the Participatory Action Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PAPLAC) was designed for developing strategies and operational plans in each of the subregions. Project activities continue to exemplify participatory methods in the four major areas of intervention: agriculture and food technologies; institution strengthening; gender sensitization; increased income generation and employment; and training in communication skills. Within these areas, impact is sought both at the grass-roots level, among technicians who implement programmes, and at the policy-making level.

37. The "Integrated Development Programme for Women of Golfito in Costa Rica", is one example of the effective use of the participatory method in the development of a grass-roots project. It began when a number of women,

confronted with a crisis of raising their children on their own following withdrawal of a multinational banana-growing company, and the male population migrating in search of employment, decided to organize themselves to develop micro-enterprises. At their request, UNIFEM helped them by providing training, technical assistance and credit. After participating in several workshops on subjects relating to development of business skills and self-confidence, violence and legal rights, the participants also identified the need for literacy. In collaboration with the project coordinators they helped to design training programmes to fill this need. With the assistance of community members, the women have now completed the construction of a Casa de la Mujer (a community centre that serves as a support base for the women involved in the programme), as well as a laundry facility which is income producing. Both these initiatives are fully operational.

38. This participatory experience will be used as a model for future UNIFEM interventions and has been documented in a video on Women and Literacy, financed by several United Nations agencies and coordinated by UNIFEM and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat.

39. An example of a project that not only benefits women directly, but also increases the capacity of existing institutions to respond to women's needs, is the "Alternative Food Processing Technologies for Rural Areas" in Peru. This project, executed by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), is making appropriate food processing technologies available to rural families. With the active participation of women, ITDG and the collaborating non-governmental organizations are continuing research on food processing technologies. In the various regions a number of technologies have been developed and disseminated for candied fruit processing (for which a manual has been produced), on wine production, soap-making, on dried fruit, and on legume and vegetable production.

40. The women have moved to the stage of establishing their own production units, and a revolving loan fund has been created to finance purchases of raw materials. Another group is producing 120 bottles of wine per month. As the project progresses into its second year, interest has been created among non-governmental organizations with women's programmes in other parts of Peru, from which requests for support are being received.

41. UNIFEM support of three related agricultural projects in the north-east and north-west provinces of Argentina, illustrate the type of technical and policy impact the Fund can have with strategic placed funding. These projects are executed by the Secretariat for Agriculture and Livestock, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation and Agriculture (IICA). The projects are a major government initiative in rural development, involving UNIFEM-funded training of extension workers and rural women's groups; technical assistance; land tilling; credit and productive initiatives. The activities, funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), are being carried out in marginalized rural areas geared towards women farmers who previously were not considered key actors in the Government's small-producer

programmes. A 1990 evaluation of these projects found that the use of the participatory approach mobilized groups or organized farmers - men and women - to express their needs to policy makers at local, regional and national levels. UNIFEM will communicate the experience of these projects to other agencies over the next year.

42. Also in Argentina, a pilot project "Promotion of Participation in Cachi" demonstrates how a grass-roots activity with limited funds can serve as a catalyst in addressing rural women's needs at the regional level. The project established a small agro-industry in fruits and vegetables. To support this initiative, the women were trained in technical skills for processing and preservation, community organization, and gender awareness. Through use of a revolving loan fund, they opened a community store to sell their produce. The results have attracted women's groups from neighboring regions of Cachi who, in turn, have organized their communities and obtained credit for similar activities.

43. As part of UNIFEM efforts to review and learn from its experiences, an analysis of ongoing projects in the Latin American and Caribbean region is under way. Three projects in Peru and five in the Caribbean have been analysed, and it is expected that all projects will be analysed by the end of 1991. The results of the reviews to date have been shared with the respective UNDP offices and with the executing agencies. These recommendations will be integrated into future programming activities.

D. Global programmes and initiatives

44. Across the three regions of the developing world, certain basic issues have consistently emerged as areas of vital concern to women that require special analyses and responses, particularly with respect to their gender dimensions. These issues include food security, security of income and employment, national development planning, management of natural resources, and active participation in the political processes. UNIFEM is addressing these issues through the programmes and initiatives described below. An additional issue, that of violence against women as a development concern, is under review. A consultant was assigned to identify and assess data on the problem. An interim report on her work is available as an information paper, which will be further developed. UNIFEM will also prepare a policy paper on the situation of women refugees and will work closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to develop some pilot projects.

1. Global programmes

(a) Women and food-cycle technologies

45. The Fund's global programme on food technologies, which was established to help create an enabling environment within which women can gain widespread access to appropriate technologies, has made much progress during the year.

46. With regard to information activities, UNIFEM has discussed the continuation of the series of sourcebooks on food technology with the Italian Women's Association (AIDOS), and funds have been secured from the Italian Government to produce five more books during 1991/1992. These will be prepared in collaboration with the Intermediate Technology Development Group and will cover: storage and packaging; drying; animal products; low-cost transport devices; and women's role in the development of food processing technologies. The Inter-American Development Bank has expressed interest in funding translation of all the sourcebooks into a fourth language - Spanish - for distribution in Latin America.

47. Feedback from the recipients of the five sourcebooks in use has been very positive and useful. However, the need has been identified for production of technology information which can be used directly by grass-roots women. In this regard, UNIFEM held a brainstorming session on "Strategies for the Dissemination of Appropriate Technologies to Rural Women". This brought together experienced women from technology agencies, women's organizations, United Nations and donor agencies, marketing and advertising agencies, and communications networks. The session confirmed the need for a strategy, but stressed that plans should be developed at the regional level. Accordingly, UNIFEM organized four regional meetings at Harare, Dakar, Bangkok and Quito at which participants had the chance to explore innovative approaches to increasing women's access to information on food-cycle technologies.

48. With respect to programming activities, major focus has continued to be in Africa where six ongoing food technology projects were evaluated. In addition, a thematic evaluation of fish smoking activities funded by UNIFEM was undertaken jointly with the International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD). It is hoped that the findings of this evaluation will be used to produce guidelines on modalities for transfer of improved fish smoking techniques.

49. The lessons learned from these evaluations have been used jointly with the findings of several UNIFEM identification missions to develop a major new programme of support to technology dissemination in the region. The focus of this programme is to experiment with innovative approaches to overcome macro-level constraints which continue to impede women's access to productive technologies.

50. Activities include: preparation and distribution of guidelines, investment portfolios, catalogues and other forms of information of use to project managers and others involved in technology transfer; facilitation of transfer of technical skills among women through peer training; exploration and publicizing of women's role in the innovation process; support to networks to facilitate exchange of experience; identification of major technology projects into which gender issues can be incorporated; and gender awareness training for staff of technology centres and science and technology departments.

51. In order to provide increased technology support to other geographic regions, initial investigations were made to form the basis for programming. In Asia, country studies on women and food technology were commissioned in India, Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines, and support was given to Approtech Asia to organize a regional meeting at which priority areas for interventions in appropriate food technology were discussed.

52. In Latin America, a UNIFEM staff member visited five countries (Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia) to consult with technology institutions, women's organizations, government departments and non-governmental organizations and United Nations and donor agencies on priority areas for assistance in disseminating appropriate food technologies to women.

53. In both Asia and Latin America results of these initial investigations are to be discussed further at the regional level in order to design a support programme which responds to expressed needs.

54. The food technology programme has a full-time project officer based in New York and three field-based technical officers (Harare, Dakar, Quito). General direction is given by the UNIFEM Senior Adviser on Technology and Small Enterprise Development. As part of the decentralization of the women and food-cycle technologies programme, it is hoped that as of 1993, programme officers and their support will be an integral part of the Fund's regional programmes.

(b) Credit support system

55. During the period under review, UNIFEM continued its support for revolving loan funds and guarantee-cum-risk funds; explored new financing options for credit; began work on credit guidelines; and developed a strategic approach for future activities to incorporate women in the economic mainstream.

56. The first Regional Workshop on UNIFEM-supported credit and income-generating projects was held at Banjul in May 1990, for project managers from 11 Anglophone countries in Africa. Twenty-one participants exchanged information and experiences regarding their roles as project managers. As a result, an informal network was begun that is expected to serve as a valuable reinforcement for enhancing the current credit support system. Additionally, UNIFEM is developing a proposal based on the training needs assessment completed by project managers, to establish a project management training facility for the Africa region. Consideration will also be given to the potential benefits and costs of conducting similar workshops in the African Francophone countries as well as in the Latin America/Caribbean, and the Asia/Pacific regions.

57. On the basis of findings from monitoring visits to Coos Mill projects in Gambia, a number of areas for future studies are indicated: (a) it seemed that women saved time through the introduction of the coos mills, though more needs to be known about how much time is saved and how it is used; (b) the

lack of proper bookkeeping practices was prevalent, and the need for training in business management and bookkeeping skills appears to be great; (c) it was noted that out of the total 15 coos mill projects, 3 were owned by individuals, which appeared to have a better performance record than the 12 owned by women's groups/communities. There is a need to document the experiences of the projects, and make a comparative analysis of individual coos mill enterprises, versus group/community approaches.

58. A UNIFEM study assessing women's responses to existing credit schemes in Uganda, analysed varying assumptions behind the credit support system to discover reasons for women's low participation rate. The findings identified the banks' lengthy procedures as the primary deterrent. Other contributing factors include illiteracy, fear of approaching banks, lack of information on existing credit schemes, and prohibitive transportation costs for rural women. The findings and recommendations will help shape future UNIFEM initiatives, as well as the efforts of those Uganda Government and banking institutions who have agreed on the need to formulate a credit project, "Bank Goes to the People" placing emphasis on the need to improve current methods of operation in order to increase women's participation in the mainstream banking system.

59. A government-requested UNIFEM programme/project identification mission to Mongolia made a preliminary assessment of women's access to banking systems during a period of political change. The study found that although enterprises run by women do have access to credit, they face other problems. For instance, sewing machines are not locally available and must be imported. Assistance was requested from UNIFEM for the establishment of a mechanism to expand a women's sewing enterprise. At the request of the Women's Federation, UNIFEM is also helping in the formulation of a revolving loan fund system, and will provide the Federation with appropriate credit policies and guidelines.

(c) Small enterprise development

60. UNIFEM has long been involved in the support of grass-roots women's enterprise initiatives. It is now stepping up its efforts through its membership on the Donor Steering Committee on Small Enterprise Development, and with the assignment of a Senior Adviser in the New York office to develop a comprehensive strategy for support to the Regional Sections in the design and implementation of the small enterprise components of their regional investment plans.

61. A document produced by the Donor Steering Committee, listing the current and recently completed activities of various agencies active in this field, includes 27 UNIFEM projects. About half of these projects were implemented in collaboration with other agencies, among them, ILO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Using this as a base, a strategy will be developed for donor coordination of small enterprise development in selected countries. UNIFEM is on the subcommittee coordinating this initiative.

62. The first issue of the Small Enterprise Development Journal, published in March 1990, has been well received. UNIFEM serves as the Africa region sub-editor of the Journal and is taking responsibility for preparing a special issue on women, which will allow further dissemination of the Fund's experience with small enterprise development.

63. A start has been made in responding to the needs of geographical units for specialists' assistance. In particular, at the request of the Africa region, the Fund's Adviser headed a five-woman team, with expertise in credit, law, training, technology and small enterprise development on a mission to Namibia to develop a comprehensive strategy for delivering technical assistance in this area.

2. Global initiatives

(a) National machineries

64. National machineries within government structures were conceived to function as one of the critical instruments for ensuring that the women's agenda would become an integral part of developing country national development plans and programmes. With the global economic and social crises, these machineries, too, are facing increasing difficulties. UNIFEM was requested by its Consultative Committee to study ways and means of strengthening national machineries in developing countries.

65. In early 1990 a meeting was held with major donor partners, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDP and the Commonwealth Secretariat, who were engaged in the work of strengthening national machineries. At that meeting it became apparent that more coordination was required among donor agencies, and that national machineries themselves should play a major role in identifying problems to be addressed as well as ways of solving them.

66. In October, Ministers in charge of national machineries in Commonwealth countries called for better donor coordination in support of their work in a communiqué emanating from their biennial meeting held at Ottawa. Later the same month UNIFEM met with the OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) WID Expert Group to enlist their support for a donor-coordinated programme to strengthen national machineries over a three-year period leading up to the World Conference on Women in 1995. Based on enthusiastic support from both donors and potential participants in the programme, UNIFEM will begin consultations in early 1991 to test the feasibility of this idea and, depending on the results, develop a programme.

(b) Environment

67. In response to the growing concern that women, environment and development issues be substantively addressed during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNIFEM, at the invitation of the

permanent Special Adviser on women, environment and development to that office. The Special Adviser is providing the necessary orientation to include the aforementioned issues into the mainstream of Conference activities, for example, in the draft outline for national reports to the 1992 Conference. She is also encouraging and facilitating mainstreaming of those issues in regional and national policy and planning.

68. In collaboration with the UNDP/WID Division, UNIFEM is also actively involved as a member of the UNDP Environmental Action Team (EAT) in helping to draw up the Environmental Management Guidelines for UNDP technical assistance programmes. The Fund is part of a working group to advise on programme/ project approaches and methodologies related to women and the environment.

69. As co-chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group in support of the UNEP Global Assembly of Women and Environment to be held at Miami, Florida, in November 1991, UNIFEM has maintained a close working relationship with UNEP. The Fund is also in contact with the Women's Foreign Policy Council, which is sponsoring a "World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet," immediately following the UNEP event from 8 to 12 November 1991. As both the Assembly and Congress are focusing on promotion of the issue of women, environment and development at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNIFEM, will be in a position to provide ongoing advice and support to the planning and follow-up processes for these events.

70. With the support of the Government of the Netherlands, UNIFEM has a Consultant/Adviser at headquarters through the 1992 Conference, to provide continuous advice and assistance on planning and evaluating its projects related to women, environment and development. The UNIFEM Consultative Committee has expressed high interest for mainstreaming initiatives concerning women, environment and development, and for direct support to projects.

(c) Monitoring and evaluation

71. UNIFEM places high priority on monitoring and evaluating interventions. These functions not only provide avenues for identifying critical lessons to be learned for sustainable development programmes for women, but project monitoring can often lead to timely feedback and assistance for addressing some of the problems that are likely to arise during implementation. Therefore, a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit was established specifically to systematize and manage these functions.

72. In 1985 UNIFEM received its "mainstreaming" mandate from the General Assembly, that is, to demonstrate how to put women on the development agenda and how to transform development planning and delivery systems so that development resources get into the hands of women. A publication of May 1990, Women on the Agenda: UNIFEM's Experience in Mainstreaming with Women 1985-1990, by Dr. Mary Anderson, presents an assessment of the achievements and persistent shortfalls observed in this period.

73. The report indicates that over the course of the years since 1985, UNIFEM, as part of the women in development movement, has successfully and significantly contributed to: "(1) placing gender on the agenda of most development agencies and at most development fora; (2) institutionalizing women in development; virtually every Government and international development agency has established a women's machinery or women in development unit; and (3) increasing resource allocations to women's programming". On the other side of the ledger, the report finds that there are three interrelated barriers to mainstreaming: "(1) the continuing basic resistance to women in development; (2) the location of women's machineries which has specialized and marginalized the issues; and (3) the continuing welfare emphasis on women with special needs and problems, rather than on women's productive and problem-solving roles."

74. As a follow-up to the assessment, UNIFEM took two related initiatives: (1) assigned a consultant to document "UNIFEM/UNDP: Collaboration in Mainstreaming with Women since 1985", a collaboration which has grown since the establishment of the WID Division in UNDP; and (2) in order to fill a gap identified during the assessment, a consultant was assigned to develop the typologies of the Fund's mainstreaming interventions. The report compares the experiences of various UNIFEM projects designed to strengthen national machineries and to incorporate gender issues in development planning - within UNDP country programming, sectoral ministries, multisectoral programmes, mainstream data collection, training, credit institutions, sectoral research, and in upscaling women-specific grass-roots projects. The typology provides a framework for systematizing the lessons learned, and for deriving generalizable principles for effective mainstreaming strategies. The report is being reviewed for publication.

75. The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit is developing links with similar units in bilateral aid agencies and with the larger United Nations family. UNIFEM was invited by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs to participate in a three-day workshop on "approaches and methods in the evaluation of aid". At the invitation of PROWWESS (Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Environmental Sanitation Services)/UNDP, UNIFEM participated in a four-day meeting of senior water and sanitation specialists, hosted by the World Health Organization, to refine goals and indicators for monitoring and evaluation at community, national and global levels. This networking has led to close working relationships with the UNDP/Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation (BPPE), exchanges with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Inter-Development Research Council (IDRC).

76. One of the things learned in these exchanges is that as a matter of policy, every evaluation commissioned by other monitoring and evaluation units is published and disseminated. This is a policy that UNIFEM is considering adopting.

77. The Unit has trained a pool of potential consultants from Asia/Pacific and Francophone Africa, at workshops at Bangkok and Dakar respectively, in

project formulation, monitoring and evaluation in these regions. They will also assist local women's groups to design their own projects for external and internal financing.

78. The first set of lessons drawn from UNIFEM project evaluations was compiled in October 1990. To date, 15 evaluations have been completed with the assistance of short-term consultants. The lessons are fed back into new programming through the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) meetings which are organized by the Unit.

E. Programme enhancement

1. Strategic planning workshop

79. UNIFEM programmes provide the context for project activity. They are, therefore, central to its work in fulfilment of the Fund's mandate. To this end, staff members participated in a strategic planning workshop to clarify the parameters for the UNIFEM programme. The workshop offered staff the opportunity to discuss development and gender issues in depth, and together to formulate programme and management objectives. These objectives serve as the underpinning of workplans required for each operational unit and individual staff member at UNIFEM.

80. As UNIFEM moves toward a more programme-oriented approach, the efficient and effective management of projects and delivery of technical assistance is a major preoccupation. Rigorous appraisals will be a continuous feature of project management. The criteria for appraisal, as well as guidelines for project formulation have been prepared. The strategic programme planning and management process is ongoing and will itself be assessed by UNIFEM over time.

2. Evaluation of the UNIFEM Knowledge Bank

81. The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit has the responsibility for operationalizing the Knowledge Bank database. Basic information on project documents, progress reports and final reports have been entered into the computerized Knowledge Bank. While this information base has proved useful as a data resource, the function of the Bank as a repository for analysis of the impact of programmes/projects on women and development has been marginal. Plans are underway for an internal and external evaluation of the Knowledge Bank. This evaluation, together with a needs assessment, will provide the background for a proposal on establishing an effective and efficient computerized evaluation system for the Fund.

3. Thematic evaluations

82. Thematic evaluations are an important method used in drawing upon UNIFEM experience for lessons that can improve future project designs. The

fish-smoking Chorkor technology discussed earlier is an example of such an evaluation. In 1990-1991, UNIFEM will focus on "participatory evaluation" and "gender sensitivity training evaluation".

(a) Participatory evaluation

83. At the request of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) UNIFEM is a member of the working group led by UNDP to document participatory evaluation methodologies in selected projects, one of which is a UNIFEM-supported project in Lesotho (LES/87/WO1). A consultant is preparing an inventory of all the materials already published on "participatory evaluation" in order to identify the gaps and prepare for UNIFEM strategic interventions. At the same time, the Fund responded to a request from the Foundation for Filipina Women to strengthen the monitoring and management capacities of the women's group in the project of San Miguel, Philippines. (This was a project funded by UNIFEM whose participants earned a reputation as a reliable and ingenious group with strong leadership.) This participatory evaluation will also include a model on process documentation which should prove useful for other UNIFEM projects.

(b) Gender sensitivity training evaluation

84. Recent research and development work has highlighted this theme a great deal. It is also an area where UNIFEM expertise is often called upon. For example, gender sensitization training was provided to UNDP field staff and government counterparts in collaboration with UNDP/WID. The Fund sponsored a number of workshops for awareness raising of planners, technicians and project managers at various levels. There are an increasing number of requests to support similar training projects.

85. The Fund's mainstreaming publication, Women on the Agenda, raises the challenge that "it remains to be proven that the inclusion of gender analysis will result in greater success with programming and project results". An evaluation of the impact of action in this theme area will attempt to address this challenge.

F. Inter-organizational cooperation

1. United Nations system

86. There has been stepped-up collaboration with other United Nations agencies, not only at the global level, but also in support of regional and local efforts to support women for participating in and benefiting from development initiatives. The examples taken from the period covered by this report are merely illustrative of this support.

87. UNIFEM is now a fully involved member of the WID subgroup of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), with emphasis in the last year on preparation for two gender training workshops in Francophone Africa.

88. UNHCR requested the collaboration of UNIFEM in the formation of a development approach to working with women refugees, particularly in Africa. Protection and rehabilitation strategies have hitherto characterized work with refugees. UNIFEM welcomes the new initiative to use development approaches with refugee women. With the increasing numbers of emergency situations erupting around the world, this experience will be useful for rapid responses to critical situations.

89. Another new collaboration began with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat) growing out of the Fund's interest in the significant role grass-roots women play in human settlements development. A jointly sponsored mission to assess how women can participate in economically productive activities in existing Habitat projects visited Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and follow-up action is being planned.

90. UNIFEM is expanding its use of audio/visual media in its work, ex., in collaboration with ILO, UNIFEM has developed a TV and radio project to promote awareness of the need for equality of opportunities and treatment of women; a UNIFEM/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) video production on women and literacy, "A Key to Freedom", was coordinated and launched by UNIFEM at a UNESCO International Seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for Women in Islamic countries, held in the USSR. Also with UNESCO, UNIFEM co-sponsored a workshop on "Women and Politics" held in Bangkok, and the Fund is establishing a task force to further explore and develop approaches for women, political power, and development.

91. UNIFEM joined forces with PROWWESS to mobilize the women attending the UNDP/World Bank Conference "Global Consultation on Safe Water and Sanitation for the 1990s" held in India, to ensure that grass-roots women's concerns were adequately reflected in the New Delhi Declaration.

92. UNIFEM is also working with various United Nations agencies at country level; for example, with UNIDO in the identification of women's needs for low-cost transport in rural communal farming areas of Zimbabwe; with UNDP Trinidad to jointly support the Women's Bureau of Curacao; with other members of the JCGP Sub-Group (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP) in Senegal to evaluate the national Action Plan for Women; with the regional office of UNICEF in Guatemala on assistance to government officials and non-governmental organizations in the formulation of policies that incorporate women in the planning process; with UNICEF in Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama in the analysis of school textbooks concerning gender stereotyping in these countries.

2. Intra-regional organizations

93. To promote women's role in the design of economic and social development policies and strategies for countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and ECOWAS, subregional workshops were held in the Niger and Senegal.

94. The Asian Development Bank and UNIFEM sponsored a Regional Conference in Manila on gender issues in agriculture. Seven women farmers were invited to describe the obstacles they face and how they overcame them, to the top policymakers and planners from 16 countries in the region.

95. To enhance coordination on programming for women in development among multilateral organizations, UNIFEM convened inter-agency forums on women in development in Thailand, Pakistan and India. Focal points, joined by counterparts in bilateral donor organizations, conducted joint training on gender-responsive programming.

96. A UNIFEM/Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) regional training programme on formulation, management and evaluation of development projects with a gender perspective, will train four representatives of non-governmental organizations, middle-level technicians and government institutions from each country in Central America. It will be the first of its kind and will be used as a model in the other subregions.

3. Non-governmental organizations

97. Non-governmental organizations are important actors in all aspects of UNIFEM programmes and projects. With reduced flows of aid, independent self-financing is becoming increasingly crucial for the development of institutional capacity of non-governmental organizations. UNIFEM and the UNDP/NGO Division sponsored eight women participants from non-governmental organizations to attend an International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Southern Networks Programme to discuss the constraints and mechanisms of income generation and self-financing by organizations in the voluntary sector.

98. The Asia/Pacific Section of UNIFEM collaborated with Appropriate Technology International (ATI) to evaluate the obstacles and opportunities in providing venture capital for women's appropriate technology enterprises. UNIFEM will include a jointly-funded gender training component in the regional credit programme for women developed by ACCION International among its network of affiliates throughout Latin America. These are only a few brief examples of the extensive partnership UNIFEM has with non-governmental organizations. In fact, over 30 per cent of the Fund's projects are executed by non-governmental organizations worldwide.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Management

99. At the 1990 strategic planning workshop, the UNIFEM mission statement and strategic plan were clarified and updated. Subsequently, individual workplans were formulated.

100. In December 1990, a job classification exercise was completed for review, involving all existing core and technical support posts at headquarters. In addition, a study was initiated to redefine and classify the roles and responsibilities of field project personnel. Performance objectives have been established for each staff member, and a midterm performance review was completed under the new Personnel Appraisal Review (PAR) system.

101. Ongoing enhancement of the knowledge and skill of UNIFEM staff is an important management objective. In the last year, the Director, Deputy Director and Chief of Finance and Administration participated in week-long management training courses organized by UNDP on communication, leadership, supervision and the management of change. Professional and General Service staff participated in appropriate skills training such as budget management systems, computer software programmes, gender analysis, language, and communications.

102. Structural changes begun in 1989 continued in 1990 with the creation of a new Technical Services Section which pools UNIFEM technical resources focusing on sectoral specializations with expertise in the area of women and development. A Monitoring and Evaluation Unit was created to implement the Fund's expanded programme for ongoing assessments. As the Fund's strategic plans unfold, other needed changes that may emerge will be reviewed.

B. Finance and administration

103. The Fund's financial situation continues to hold firm. The total income in 1990 reached approximately $US 11 million, of which about $8 million represents voluntary contributions (a 34 per cent increase over the 1989 total voluntary contribution of $6.6 million). Core contributions for 1991 also look strong, based on the November 1990 United Nations Pledging Conference. A core income of over $10 million is projected for 1991.

104. A funding review approved at the thirty-seventh session of the UNDP Governing Council resulted in a revised formula adjusting the reserve level twice each year in April/May and September/October. With the introduction of the new formula an additional $2 million will be available in 1990-1991 for programming.

105. UNIFEM has been assigned its own agency code and account number which will allow the Fund to account more appropriately for the portion of a project's budget that it manages. This obviates the need to use an executing agency for expenditure on relevant budget lines, and savings on agency charges accrue to UNIFEM programmes. Also, discussions have been initiated with UNDP about the extension of their existing "Small Project Assistance" modalities to UNIFEM. Appropriate criteria and guidelines are being prepared. Essentially this facility will help simplify the Fund's ability to respond to grass-roots project requests for innovative small-scale project activities. Previously they were handled under the Director's Approval Ceiling. However, the mechanism was cumbersome, and compliance with requirements was often difficult

for small non-governmental organizations. A new Global Project, renamed Direct Action Ceiling is in preparation for approval of the Consultative Committee in 1991.

106. The Project Budget Management System has been installed, with further enhancement under review. The staff received initial training in its use, and skills will be updated as needed. Following the evaluation of the Knowledge Bank, adjustments will be made to coordinate these two systems.

107. UNIFEM has been linked to the UNDP electronic mail system which facilitates communication with UNDP headquarters and many field offices.

108. In 1990 programme delivery increased 45 per cent over 1989 levels. This was largely due to the improved project management systems and a streamlined project approval process mentioned above.

C. Resource mobilization

109. UNIFEM has had very satisfactory results from its first annual fund-raising workplan. At the November Pledging Conference for Operational Activities for Development, pledges were 13.4 per cent over 1990. Four countries, Finland, Norway, Netherlands and Canada pledged over $US 1 million each. Significant increases in pledges were announced by the Netherlands, France, Spain and Sweden. Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States have subsequently announced new increases. Canada also announced its intention to earmark $Can 6 million for the Fund's SADCC Regional Programme. The Netherlands is contributing $US 419,000 in support of UNIFEM mainstreaming work in West Africa. Also of note are the many recipient countries who continue to support UNIFEM despite growing economic problems. A pledge of $500,000 was received from Zonta, an international non-governmental organization, bringing its total contribution to $1,500,000.

110. Within the context of the workplan, the Fund's National Committees and other international non-governmental organizations have been instrumental in encouraging government contributions and assisting UNIFEM staff in its initiatives. Eleven National Committees have signed official Agreements and are playing an increasingly important role in mobilizing resources as well as informing their citizens and Governments about women in development activities in general and the work of UNIFEM in particular. Additional Committees are in the process of being organized.

111. As part of its outreach plan, UNIFEM is identifying new avenues of support. As a result of the association with the Noel Foundation for the first UNIFEM Award Ceremony for women leaders, they have pledged $US 1 million for 1991 projects. The Awards are scheduled to be given every second year to recognize women who have demonstrated leadership in forging a path for women in various spheres of activity.